DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 172 145 CS 004 818

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TITLE New Words for the Communication Skills Lexicon. Technical Note.
INSTITUTION Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, Los Alamitos, Calif.
REPORT NO SWRL-TN-2-75-04
PUB DATE 26 Feb 75
NOTE 16p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Language; *Communication Skills; Dictionaries; Elementary Education; *Language Usage; Lexicology; *Vocabulary; *Vocabulary Skills

ABSTRACT

The sources used, the procedures followed, and the results obtained in updating the kindergarten through grade six communication skills lexicon are covered in this report. The final list of 322 new terms included in the lexicon are appended. (Author)

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SOUTHWEST REGIONAL LABORATORY
TECHNICAL NOTE

DATE: February 26, 1975

NO: TN 2-75-04

NEW WORDS FOR THE COMMUNICATION SKILLS LEXICON

Mary Rhode

ABSTRACT

To make the communication skills lexicon contemporary, words have been added to update the K-6 lexicon. This report covers the sources used, the procedures followed, and the results obtained. The final list of 322 new terms included in the lexicon are appended.

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NEW WORDS FOR THE COMMUNICATION SKILLS LEXICON

Mary Rhode

The communication skills lexicon (Rhode & Cronnell, 1974) is based on the most comprehensive and up-to-date studies of children's word use that are available. However, the major studies of elementary children's speaking and writing vocabularies were published in 1945 (Rinsland) and 1957 (Murphy and others) and include data gathered during many preceding years.[1] The more recent studies are based on much smaller samplings and are primarily either classroom-oriented (Jacobs, 1967) or are taken from reading materials (Durr, 1970). They do not reflect many lexical innovations in general use dur ng the past two decades. To supplement this deficiency, staff undertook a project to compile a list of terms, relatively new in K-6 vocabulary, derived from a total of six valid compilations. Work was begun in March, 1972, and continued through April, 1974, as additional sources became available.

SOURCES

The sources for this study were primarily dictionaries, some of which do not present American English exclusively. None were limited to children's vocabulary.

Th[illegible]st source used (Berg, 1953) represents an effort to collect all lexical items reflective of vocabulary growth and change: neologisms,

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[1]The children's writings for the Rinsland study were collected in the spring of 1937 (footnote, p. 7).

acronyms, new phrases, new meanings added to old words, etc. The compiler recorded new terms from both oral and written language.

The second source consulted was also a glossary of new words and new word uses (Reifer, 1955). No information was available concerning either the sources for the material or the procedures followed in compiling the dictionary. However, it is a valuable and comprehensive study of relatively new terms.

The third source was a list of "New Words and Phrases" found in *The New York Times encyclopedic almanac 1972* (pp. 428-430). These are also new terms plus new meanings for older terms, and were prepared by the lexicographical staff of The World Publishing Company.

The publication of the 1971 addenda section of *Webster's third new international dictionary* (1961) provided the fourth source. This list represents words that have, according to the publisher, G. & C. Merriam Company, become established in the language since 1961.

Berger (1971) conducted a study in which a sample of 10,000 words were taken from the November 20, 1969 edition of *The New York Times*. In a comparison with the Thorndike and Lorge (1944) word count, Berger found 78 words, relatively new in the language, that did not appear at all in the older study. This list of new words was the fifth source.

The Barnhart dictionary of new English since 1963 (1973), with approximately 5000 entries, was the last source used. The new words and phrases were collected from United States, British, and Canadian

writing---newspapers, magazines, and books. Terms were judged "new" if they did not appear in any major standard English dictionary before 1963.

INCLUSION-EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Because of the variances in the sources, some additional inclusion-exclusion criteria were applied together with those defined previously for the communication skills lexicon. Words were included if the new listed meaning was the only or primary meaning in use by children today (e.g., parka and penicillin). Words were excluded if only the listed meaning was new, and there was another meaning, older but still common (e.g., phantom and profile). Words were excluded if they were new only in their uses as other parts of speech, not in their forms or meanings (e.g., audition as a verb). Of course, words were included only if they were judged to be known by K-6 American children.

Some words were not included even though they are probably familiar to many children. The exclusions were comprised of (1) words that seem to be changing now (e.g., kook, mooch), (2) words that refer only to fashions and are created at the capricious whim of designers (e.g., mini, midi, maxi, pantdress), and (3) words that might be offensive, or [illegible]onable (e.g., acidhead, barf, bennies, narc).

PROCEDURES

Each source was reviewed by two staff members, who listed only those words in current use by children. The two lists were compared for agreement; those words lacking agreement were reconsidered for

inclusion. The two resulting lists from each source were combined. If more than one compilation was reviewed at a time, the resulting lists were merged alphabetically.[2]

The alphabetical list was edited independently by eight SWRL staff members, selected for their knowledge of children's comtemporary vocabulary. They were asked to cross out words not currently known by K-6 children. The terms were retained that were agreed upon by at least 50% of the eight staff members.

After all of the available sources had been reviewed and edited, 7% of the remaining terms seemed to be reliably well-known (e.g., ad, cheeseburger, drive-in, sweatshirt).[3] Therefore, an additional validation procedure was instigated in which the questionable 93% of the terms were divided into five lists of approximately 80 words each. All five lists were sent to each of seven sixth grade public school classes with students of average ability and were distributed equally within each class. 166 students participated. Teachers administered the word lists and were instructed to provide help only in reading the words, not in interpreting the meanings. Children were asked to (1) circle a word that was known and (2) draw a line through a word that was not known. The children were allowed only 30 minutes in which to edit the list.

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[2]The first two sources were the only ones available in the initial stage of the study; the third, fourth, and fifth sources were reviewed in the second stage; the sixth source provided the third and most recent stage.

[3]All of these words are starred in Appendix A.

Words circled by 60% of the responding students were included in the lexicon of words known by children in the K-6 range. Words circled by 40-59% of the students were analyzed, but none of these words were included. The validation study netted 293 new words. These, added to the 29 reliably well-known words that were not tested, constitute a final list of 322 new words, identified in Appendix A.

CATEGORIES OF NEW WORDS

New terms expand the vocabulary in a variety of ways (see Table 1), but these usually involve a change in meaning and/or form of older words. Metaphors, or new applications of old words, are probably the most productive source of vocabulary in English. Many of these are also compounds (e.g., anchorman, bullhorn, hot-rod, turtleneck, whirlybird). However, since the lexicon is a list of words and not a dictionary providing varieties of meanings, these figures of speech were included only if the older meaning of a word is not also known by children today. This limitation reduced the number of metaphors.

The most prolific process for creation of new words in this study involved changes in forms of older words. Compounding produced the highest percentage of new terms. Most of these went through regular growth stages from phrases to hyphenated forms (often with a change in function) to one-word compounds. Another form change used frequently involves shortening of words (e.g., advertisement → ad, delicatessen → deli, liberation → lib, modern → mod). Other form changes that

TABLE 1

Categories of New Words

Metaphors	16
Compounds	186
Shortened forms	16
Abbreviations and Acronyms	8
Affixed forms	59
Foreign loan words	13
Onomatopoeic and Reduplicative words	6
Portmanteau words	4
Neologisms and Words of obscure origin	14
TOTAL	322

reduce terms are abbreviations, acronyms, and respellings (e.g., A-bomb, Ms., radar, TV).

Affixation processes allow for change in the meaning of a word by adding a prefix (e.g., defrost, nonstick, recycle), or for change in the function of a word (with some shift in meaning) by adding a suffix (e.g., disposable, fluoridate, lighter).

With increased communication, travel, and population mobility, more and more foreign words are being adopted. At the level of children's vocabulary, many of these are food names like pizza and tortilla,[4] but many others have also been assimilated (e.g., bikini, Chicano, karate, smorgasbord).

Actual innovations are few. Some onomatopoeic and reduplicative terms are relatively new (e.g., beep, hush-hush, nitty-gritty). Portmanteau words are not plentiful, but we do find firmly-established new blends like brunch and smog in children's speech. Occasionally the births of neologisms are documented, but often dictionaries indicate that the origins are obscure or unknown (e.g., dude, fink, hassle, gas, pooch, slang, snob, stooge). Some of these have been in the vocabulary so long that we don't remember their origins, but the newer terms still have a slangy feeling. (The word slang itself originated in the underworld [Partridge, 1966].)

CONCLUSION

It would be desirable to know which of the newer words will remain active in the vocabulary. But words reflect life, and life changes.

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[4]These and other foreign food names are already in the general lexicon.

Because of this impermanence of language items, staff tended to be conservative in the selection of terms. The list of 322 terms resulting from this study is representative of the relatively new words that are being used currently by K-6 children and updates the communications skills lexicon described in Rhode & Cronnell (1974).

APPENDIX A

New Words

A-bomb
*ad
aerial
Afro
airconditioner
airconditioning
aircrew
airfield
airlift
airway
allergy
all-out
all-time
anchorman
antipollution
aqua
arm-twisting
*astronaut
atomic
audio
audio-visual
audition
automotive
*baby-sit
*baby-sitter
*ball-point
bazooka
beep
bikeway
bikini
blastoff
body-surf
boysenberry
*bra
breakdown
broadcaster
brunch
brush-off
build-up
bulldoze
*bulldozer
bullhorn
*bumper
bypass
*carhop
carpool
carport
cassette
ccase-fire
cellophane
centerfold
change-up
charbroil
cheeseburger
chef
Chicano
choosy
chow
chrome
chute
classified
co-host
*Coke
commute
condominium
contacts
cookout
cop-out
cordless

corny
crackdown
crackpot
crackup
crash-land
custom-built
custom-made
cutback
*darts
dashboard
day-care
deadline
defrost
defroster
deli
demonstrator
destruct
disadvantaged
disposable
[illegible]her
dive-bomb
do-it-yourself
do-it-yourselfer
documentary
doggie-bag
doodle
doubleknit
double-park
drip-dry
*drive-in
dropout
dude
earplug
east-west
easy-care
electronics
environmentalist
evacuation
expressway
eyeliner
face-lifting
fallout
far-out
fastback
filmstrip
filtertip
fink
flashback
flashcube
fluorescent
fluoridate
freaky
*freeway
freeze-dry
*freezer
frisbee
frogman
getaway
goof
grader
gremlin
grinder
ground-to-air
hairdo
handgun
handprint
hangup
hardback
hassle
hatchback
*helicopter
heliport
highjack
high-rise
hijack

hip-hugger
hippie
homemaker
homemaking
homogenize
hot-rod
hush-hush
ice-skate
in-service
intercom
jackpot
jam-packed
jazz
jazz-rock
jazzy
*jet
jive
jogging
karate
karate-chop
king-size
know-how
launderette
laundromat
lib
*lighter
litterbag
litterbug
martini
mascara
matchbook
Medicare
microfilm
microwave
minibike
minibus
missile
mod
monorail
moonflight
moonrock
moonship
moonwalk
Ms.
network
newscast
newsman
nightcap
nitty-gritty
no-no
nonstick
north-south
nuclear
offbeat
onboard
open-circuit
open-heart
orbit
Oscar
outerwear
outgoing
overall
pantyhose
paperback
paramedic
parka
parkway
party-pooper
payoff
pentagon
*penicillin
pinball
pinpoint
polyester
pooch
preview
put-down
put-on

pushover
queen-size
*quiz
radar
radiation
rainwear
rap
readymade
recyclable
recycle
re-release
resistance
ripcord
ripoff
rookie
round-the-clock
run-through
runway
sabotage
saleslady
salvage
satellite
screenwriter
screwball
scriptwriter
see-through
self-addressed
self-destruct
self-employed
short-term
shrinkproof
sideburn
*skateboard
skinny-dipping
skydiver
skydiving
skyjack
skyjacker
slipcover
*smog
smogless
smorgasbord
snorkel
snowmobile
*softball
*spaceship
speed-reading
spinout
splashdown
spokesman
stand-in
stereo
stereophonic
stooge
streamline
superduper
superhighway
superjet
supermarket
supersonic
superstar
sweatshirt
switchblade
synthetic
take-out
teen
*teen-age
*teen-ager
teenybopper
telecast
televise
*television
tennies
test-drive
three-wheeler

throwaway

tie-dye

towaway

trailer

trailer-park

transistor

*T-shirt

turnaround

turn-on

turtleneck

*TV

two-wheeler

undercover

underground

underpass

unleaded

update

walkie-talkie

walk-out

wall-to-wall

waterbed

weight-watcher

whirlybird

wiretapping

wrecker

*Words not tested because they were judged reliably well-known by K-6 children.

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